# Tenants at Queen’s Court face soaked despair amid slow reforms in renters’ rights



In the heart of Bristol, tenants at Queen’s Court have found themselves caught in a harrowing struggle against deteriorating living conditions. I witnessed the stark reality of their plight during a recent visit, where issues like damp, mould, and unsanitary plumbing compounded their suffering. The residents described their torment, revealing that filthy brown wastewater had been overflowing from their bathtubs, necessitating sleepless nights spent bailing it out to prevent flooding. Such dire circumstances highlight the dismal state of many rental properties across the country, exacerbated by a severe power imbalance between renters and landlords.

The residents' desperation became evident as I interacted with them, hearing harrowing accounts of how their homes, meant to be safe havens, had become sources of anxiety. One tenant poignantly stated, “I feel trapped in this place. I won’t invite my friends around out of shame.” This sentiment is echoed by many who face similar predicaments across the UK, navigating substandard living conditions while grappling with significant rent increases—some as high as 10%—and threats of eviction.

The struggles faced at Queen’s Court are reflective of the broader issues plaguing the private rental sector in England. Up to 11 million renters are affected by a system that fails to protect them adequately. The government's recent Renters' Rights Bill seeks to address some of these long-standing issues by abolishing no-fault Section 21 evictions, which have led to many tenants feeling insecure in their homes. This legislation also aims to introduce periodic tenancies, thus enhancing security and stability for renters while enabling them to challenge unfair practices without fearing repercussions from landlords.

Despite the government's optimism surrounding the Renters' Rights Bill, some landlords express concerns about the potential implications of increased regulations on their businesses. A report suggested that while rental prices saw a slowdown in their annual increase—rising just 3% compared to higher rates in previous years—competition for available properties remains fierce, with twelve applicants often vying for each rental opportunity. This distorted supply and demand landscape places immense pressure on renters, many of whom are already sacrificing substantial portions of their salaries to secure basic accommodations.

To ensure the efficacy of the Renters' Rights Bill, further measures must follow. The proposal includes the establishment of a Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman Service to facilitate impartial dispute resolutions, which is a crucial step towards levelling the playing field between landlords and tenants. However, many argue that additional safeguards are necessary, such as empowering tenants to withhold rent when facing severe disrepair issues, enabling greater accountability for landlords who neglect their responsibilities.

The looming question remains: how can the government navigate the delicate balance between protecting renters and ensuring landlords can sustain their businesses? The introduction of limitations on rent increases—proposed to occur no more than once a year at market rates—could alleviate some of the financial burdens faced by tenants, yet there is an urgent call for more comprehensive rent controls that would prevent landlords from exploiting the tenuous situations many renters find themselves in.

As I spoke to the tenants at Queen’s Court, the weight of their despair was palpable. One resident lamented, “I was born in this city and I now might have to leave because there’s no place for me here anymore.” This sentiment encapsulates the plight of countless individuals who are not only battling poor living conditions but are also confronted with the grim prospect of displacement from their communities.

Ultimately, as the UK grapples with a housing crisis that forces many to endure substandard living conditions and excessive financial strain, a sustained commitment to robust policy reform and tenant advocacy is paramount. For renters to feel truly secure, the government must not only implement the measures put forth in the Renters' Rights Bill but also take proactive steps to ensure that affordable, safe housing becomes a reality for all.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.
2. Paragraph 4, 6.
3. Paragraph 4, 6.
4. Paragraph 5, 6.
5. Paragraph 5.
6. Paragraph 6, 7.
7. Paragraph 6.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://metro.co.uk/2025/05/14/one-block-flats-taught-everything-britains-housing-crisis-23076819/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill> - The UK government's Renters' Rights Bill aims to transform the private rental sector by introducing periodic tenancies, abolishing Section 21 'no-fault' evictions, and limiting rent increases to once per year at market rates. It also proposes the establishment of a Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman Service to resolve tenant complaints impartially. Additionally, the bill extends Awaab's Law to the private rented sector, requiring landlords to address hazards like damp and mould within specified timeframes. These reforms seek to provide tenants with greater security and improve housing standards across England.
3. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/renters-rights-bill> - The Renters' Rights Bill, introduced to Parliament on 11 September 2024, delivers the government’s manifesto commitment to transform the experience of private renting, including by ending Section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions. The bill will improve the current system for both the 11 million private renters and 2.3 million landlords in England. It will give renters much greater security and stability so they can stay in their homes for longer, build lives in their communities, and avoid the risk of homelessness.
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/edd32a50-e1ac-43ae-ad48-10ddfc178901> - The UK government has introduced a Renters' Rights Bill aimed at transforming the private rental sector. Key reforms include abolishing no-fault evictions, standardizing property maintenance to align with the Decent Homes Standard, and ensuring landlords cannot refuse tenants with children or those receiving benefits. Additionally, tenants will have the right to request pets, and landlords are forbidden from unreasonable refusals. This reform is expected to level the field between landlords and tenants, addressing rent hikes and substandard living conditions. However, landlords express concerns about increased regulations and delays in removing problematic tenants. The government also plans to consult on improving energy efficiency in rental properties by 2030. The bill introduces an ombudsman service to resolve disputes impartially, reducing court cases.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/eb798021-f9a5-4f2b-87bf-94b1ba91c367> - UK rental prices saw their slowest annual increase in over three years in January, rising by just 3% to an average of £1,284 for new tenancies, according to Zoopla. This is a significant decrease from the 7.4% rise the previous year and the peak of 12.2% in summer 2022. Weaker tenant demand, which fell by 17% compared to the same period in 2024, is behind this slowdown. Despite the decrease, supply issues persist, with 12 renters vying for each available property, double the pre-pandemic competition level. House prices and sales involving mortgages have improved as mortgage rates have decreased due to Bank of England interest rate cuts. Concerns remain around the government's Renters' Rights bill, which aims to end 'no fault' evictions and tighten standards for rental properties, potentially reducing the number of available rental homes as landlords reconsider their market positions.
6. <https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/renters-rights-bill-second-reading-house-commons-9-october-2024> - The Renters' Rights Bill, introduced to Parliament on 11 September 2024, aims to transform the private rented sector by abolishing Section 21 'no-fault' evictions and moving to a simpler tenancy structure with all assured tenancies being periodic. This change is intended to provide more security for tenants and empower them to challenge poor practices and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction. The bill also seeks to ensure possession grounds are fair to both parties, giving tenants more security while allowing landlords to reclaim their property when reasonable. Additionally, the bill introduces measures to prevent above-market rent increases used to force tenants out and reforms the Tribunal system to support tenants in challenging unreasonable rent increases.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-bill/82ffc7fb-64b0-4af5-a72e-c24701a5f12a> - The Renters' Rights Bill introduces a transformative new tenancy system, ending the threat of arbitrary Section 21 evictions, which uproot renters from their homes with little notice and minimal justification. The new tenancy system will provide tenants with greater security and stability and empower them to challenge bad practice without fear of retaliatory eviction. Landlords will also benefit, with more straightforward regulation, and clearer and expanded possession grounds. The bill also addresses rent increases, allowing landlords to increase rents once per year to the market rate, with tenants having the right to challenge unreasonable increases at the First-tier Tribunal. Additionally, the bill introduces a new Private Rented Sector Landlord Ombudsman Service, which all private landlords in England with assured or regulated tenancies will be required by law to join, including those who use a managing agent. Tenants will be able to use the service for free to complain about a landlord's actions or behaviours, and the service will offer fair, impartial, and binding resolution for tenants.